

Green Tier Advisors
ISSUE PAPER
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ISSUE TITLE: Areas of Emphasis

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Green Tier Advisors have been asked to make recommendations to the DNR Secretary on those aspects of superior environmental performance that should be the emphasis for Green Tier. The Green Tier statute requests that the Advisors make recommendations to the Secretary on the goals and priorities for the Green Tier program. These two elements have been combined into an issue that explores the “areas of emphasis” with the objective of crafting the Advisors’ recommendations for the Green Tier focus. These areas of emphasis would be used as the Department proactively designs approaches to Green Tier, recruits participants for Green Tier, establishes long term metrics for the programs and assesses/adjusts the program over time.

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BACKGROUND: The purpose for this work is to provide recommendations for a framework that will be used to determine, for Tier 2, which letters of intent to entertain and what priority to assign to resources. When the provisions were created in the law, the expectation was that the actions of participating entities when combined would be greater than the sum of the individual actions. Similarly, the discussion at the December 16, 2006 Advisors meeting gravitated towards using shared environmental aspirations to move beyond random acts of environmental kindness to Green Tier Actions that produce collective, demonstrable benefits.

When the law was developed, there was also the understanding that the areas of emphasis would not limit the scope of what could be addressed by Green Tier participants. For example, a Green Tier participant might work on one of more of the areas of emphasis but could also have several other goals that would go beyond the areas of emphasis. This reflects the broad goal for Green Tier to have organizations aspire to the overall reduction of their environmental footprint while also sharing responsibility for addressing common environmental goals.

While 3 potential frameworks for area of emphasis were examined, using the 9 elements of the superior environmental performance definition seemed to be the preferred option. The 3 potential frameworks were tools, definition and expectations. The first was by the tools that the Green Tier provides. This would mean emphasizing Tier 1, Tier 2, Charters and Compliance Audits. The second was using the statutory definition of superior environmental performance as the basis for areas of emphasis. The 9 elements in that definition are:

- Performance beyond regulatory requirements
- Performance that addresses unregulated environmental risk

- Protecting and restoring natural resources
- Helping others comply or go beyond compliance
- Organizing entities into a program and produces superior performance
- Reducing waste or promoting reuse through design, production or delivery changes
- Conserving energy or non-renewable resources
- Adopting methods that reduce depletion or damage to non-renewable resources

The third was expectations for the Department that are stated in the Green Tier law. There are 19 expectations which include, for example, provide clear incentives for participation, promote attention to unregulated problems, increase levels of trust, lower administrative costs, etc. As the discussion progressed over the course of the meeting, the elements contained in the definition of superior environmental performance were the recurring themes.

The challenge emerging from the 12/16 meeting is to organize around the elements contained in the definition of superior environmental performance in a way that leads to recommendations that can produce cumulative results and demonstrable progress. Two different approaches have been suggested, which attempt to assimilate the expressions of environmental focus. The staff focus based on the 12/16 meeting was crafting alternatives that drew from the full breadth of issues discussed over the course of the 12/16 meeting as well as drawing in the DNR staff to suggest some specificity in anticipation of further direction from the Advisors.

ALTERNATIVES: Two alternatives have been developed. Both are drafts in need of direction from the Advisors before they could become “recommendations”. The first uses a matrix to express opportunities to use Green Tier for emerging issues, unregulated aspects, pressures outpacing actions and building better relationships. The matrix uses cells to present a decidedly sector focus in pursuit of a desired state. The second creates a set of environmental issues around which Green Tier actions would be organized, relying upon the full range of potential participants and all programs to use the Green Tier tools to address the issues. The topical emphasis provides the place for divergent interests to produce collective good. Neither alternative is mutually exclusive. The two alternatives are:

- **Desired State Matrix (attached)** – The matrix builds areas of emphasis based on a set of desired states that could be achieved through the use of Green Tier tools. The matrix is comprised of four columns (emerging issues, unregulated aspects, pressures outpacing actions and better relationships) and 9 rows (sectors of Green Tier work) creating up to 36 cells with opportunities to organize around superior environmental performance. The draft matrix was created by looking for issues with the potential for Green Tier solutions. Green Tier Coordinators from each of the DNR programs explored sectors and issues within those sectors. Not all of the sectors have been fully explored and not all of the issues are refined to the point of expressing a desired future state but the matrix does provide the range of sectors and breadth of issues that would be prime for multiple programs engaging Green Tier participants to achieve long term directions as well as short term gains.
- **Topical Emphasis (attached)** – The topical emphasis is the result of considering a broad range of environmental issues and narrowing that list by applying both environmental and economic filters to create a set of topics prime for creatively engaging the potential of Green Tier. This was created within the Cooperative Environmental Assistance program by exploring a broad range of issues and then factoring in discussions with those interested in and/or dedicated to superior environmental performance. The result of that work was narrowing down the emphasis into three categories.

This topical emphasis provides a more global view while the matrix above provides a more granular view. Three groupings of topics have been created, Energy Conservation and Greenhouse Gases, Toxics and Public Health and General Environmental Emphasis. Each of the three groupings has topics below them that would serve as the foundation developing goals that would be the targets for Green Tier action. Under each is a series of more specific focal points that would be the targets for both internally developed programs and programs submitted as a part of the Green Tier applications.

At the end of the attachment are 4 potential future points of emphasis. These were part of the overall analysis that was done but they were not included based on the objective to provide a tight list of topics.

DISCUSSION:

The intent of the discussion on 4/12 is to address three points:

- Affirm the focus on superior environmental performance. Is the discussion from the 12/16/05 meeting a consensus view that “areas of emphasis” should be based on the nine elements contained in the superior environmental performance definition?
- Identify the framework within which the Green Tier Advisors would like to see their recommendations to the Secretary developed. Is the matrix, the topical emphasis or some other alternative the preferred framework?
- Provide further direction on the granularity the Advisors would like for the recommendations. How would the Advisors like the specific program focus or broad topics for Green Tier action developed further?

DISCUSSION SYNOPSIS: [To be completed after the meeting]